

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2009/2151(INI)	Procedure completed
Report on the Commission communication: 'A community approach on the prevention of natural and man made disasters'		
Subject 3.70.10 Man-made disasters, industrial pollution and accidents 3.70.11 Natural disasters, Solidarity Fund		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	Shadow rapporteur	
		PPE HERRANZ GARCÍA Esther	
		S&D ESTRELA Edite	
		ALDE UGGIAS Giommaria	
		ECR VAN DALEN Peter	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	REGI Regional Development		06/10/2009
		ALDE USPASKICH Viktor	
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development		30/09/2009
		PPE PATRÃO NEVES Maria do Céu	
	LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs		04/02/2010
		S&D PAPADOPOULOU Antigoni	
European Commission	Commission DG European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)	Commissioner GEORGIEVA Kristalina	

Key events			
23/02/2009	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2009)0082	Summary
22/10/2009	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/06/2010	Vote in committee		Summary
06/07/2010	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0227/2010	

20/09/2010	Debate in Parliament		
21/09/2010	Results of vote in Parliament		
21/09/2010	Decision by Parliament	T7-0326/2010	Summary
21/09/2010	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2009/2151(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/7/00824

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2009)0082	23/02/2009	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE439.259	26/02/2010	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE439.951	24/03/2010	EP	
Committee opinion	AGRI	PE438.486	08/04/2010	EP	
Committee opinion	REGI	PE431.009	28/04/2010	EP	
Committee opinion	LIBE	PE439.890	28/04/2010	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0227/2010	06/07/2010	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0326/2010	21/09/2010	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2010)8656/2	10/02/2011	EC	

Report on the Commission communication: 'A community approach on the prevention of natural and man made disasters'

PURPOSE: to present a Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters.

BACKGROUND: between 1990 and 2007 the European Union witnessed a marked increase in the number and severity of both natural and man-made disasters, with a particularly significant increase in the former. Analyses carried out by the UN and other international organisations have highlighted a growing vulnerability to disasters, partly as a consequence of increasingly intensive land use, industrial development, urban expansion and infrastructure construction.

The Community has already developed a set of instruments to address various aspects of disaster preparedness, response and recovery. There is, however, no strategic approach, at the Community level, for disaster prevention.

For this reason, the Commission presents this Communication which aims to identify measures which could be included in a Community strategy for the prevention of natural and man-made disasters, building upon and linking existing measures.

CONTENT: the prevention strategy proposed by the Commission is aimed to: (i) prevent disasters from happening, where possible and, (ii) where they are unavoidable, take steps to minimise their impacts.

Community prevention approach: the Community approach to disaster prevention should explicitly seek to build on measures that have already been taken at European level ? either sector legislation or the possibility of using Community funds for preventions activities. Several proposals are envisaged:

1) Improve the understanding of disaster prevention policies at all levels of government: the Commission proposes the following:

- creating an inventory of information on disasters: the Commission will develop a comprehensive inventory of existing sources of information related to disasters. Information on the economic impacts of disasters is particularly important since it can allow policy makers to properly assess the costs and benefits of different disaster prevention measures;
- spreading best practices: the Commission will launch an inventory of best practices and facilitate the exchange of information between stakeholders;
- developing guidelines on hazard/risk mapping: hazard mapping aims to identify the areas prone to particular risks. It provides essential information to the public and is an important tool for planning authorities. Member States are in the process of developing a number of initiatives relating to hazard and risk mapping. The diversity of methodological approaches has reduced comparability of information and makes it difficult for information to be consolidated at the European level. The Commission will carry out a study on current practices of hazard and risk mapping in Member States. On this basis, Community guidelines for hazard and risk mapping will be developed, building upon existing Community initiatives. These should focus on disasters with potential cross-border impacts (e.g. floods or accidental release of chemicals and radio-nuclear agents), exceptional events (major storms), large-scale disasters (earthquakes), and disasters for which the cost of recovery measures appears to be disproportionate when compared to that of preventive measures. The possibility of developing a specific initiative on forest fires will also be explored;
- encouraging research activities: several themes under the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2007-2013) address natural and man made hazards. Through the implementation of this Programme the Commission will improve coordination of Community-financed research in this area, and make sure that research results are easily and systematically available to actors in the field of prevention and develop a database for experts with specialist knowledge.

2) Disaster management cycle: the Commission considers that a range of Community and national policies can be managed in a way that supports the disaster management cycle ? prevention, preparedness, response, recovery. This requires linking the actors involved in developing and implementing measures that can have significant impacts on disaster prevention. The Commission will work to foster best practice across the EU. In this regard, the Commission proposes:

- to extend the lessons learnt exercises to disaster prevention;
- to establish training and awareness-raising programmes in the area of disaster prevention;
- to improve the linking between actors: the Commission intends to set-up coordinated mechanisms for crisis management, involving different public and private stakeholders. A European network composed of representatives of the various national departments concerned of all the Member States could provide a useful forum for elaborating recommendations on best practices;
- to reinforce early warning tools: the Commission will reinforce the link between early warning systems by: (i) strengthening cooperation with the network of European meteorological services to integrate short-term flood alerts (including coastal floods) in the early warning systems; (ii) reducing alert times of existing early warning systems; (iii) linking existing alert systems for forest fires (EFFIS) and floods (EFAS) in the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS).

3) Making existing instruments perform better for disaster prevention: several Community financial and legislative instruments support Member States action in the field of prevention. The Commission will ensure that prevention concerns are taken into account in a more consistent and efficient way across policies and programmes (such as common agricultural or rural development policies). A more efficient targeting of Community funding should be sought.

4) Reinforce international cooperation in the field of prevention: the Commission will emphasise disaster prevention in upcoming cooperation initiatives with third countries, in particular with candidate countries and potential candidate countries within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and through the programme for prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters (PPRD) in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

5) Next steps: the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions are invited to provide the Commission with further input with a view to consolidating a Community strategy for the prevention of natural and man-made disasters. The Commission will carry out further consultations and liaise with stakeholders from the public and private sector to promote this approach and if appropriate will propose to develop it further.

Report on the Commission communication: 'A community approach on the prevention of natural and man made disasters'

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by João FERREIRA (GUE/NGL, PT) on the Commission communication: A Community approach on the prevention of natural and man made disasters.

The report welcomes the commitment made by the Commission to ensuring that disaster-prevention-related issues are taken into account more coherently in EU policies and programmes, and stresses the need for a holistic approach to disaster prevention.

Given the scale and/or the cross-border nature that disasters may assume, Members consider it necessary to enhance cooperation, both at regional and EU level, based on complementarity of action, dissemination of best practices and the principle of solidarity between Member States. They take the view that coordinated actions and strategies between Member States, the different sectors and the different actors involved in the disaster management cycle can lead to real advances in the field of disaster prevention.

The committee supports the proposal to set up a network made up of representatives of the various competent national services of all the Member States. It emphasises the role of this network in exchanging experience and prevention measures and in establishing a common methodology and minimum requirements for hazard and risk mapping at EU level.

The report points out the importance of reducing inequalities between regions and Member States in terms of their capacity to protect their populations, and their property, including the cultural heritage, by supporting their efforts to improve prevention, particularly in the regions and Member States that are highly vulnerable to the risk of disasters. It urges that particular attention be paid to the most isolated, most sparsely populated, mountainous and border regions of Europe, and the most economically disadvantaged European regions. In this regard, Members

highlight the need for the Solidarity Fund Regulation to be revised by adapting the eligibility criteria to the characteristics of each region and each disaster, including slowly evolving disasters such as drought, paying particular attention to production sectors, the most vulnerable areas and the populations affected, and enabling mobilisation to be more flexible and timely;

Members point out that cohesion policy is an essential tool in natural disaster risk prevention. They consider that it must be possible for the various funds and instruments to operate flexibly and in a coordinated manner in order to improve the functioning and effectiveness of that policy.

The report stresses the need to create a suitable financial framework for disaster prevention, with adequate financial resources for preventing and combating disasters, that will strengthen and link existing instruments. It asks that, in this context, prevention should be taken into account in the 2014-2020 Financial Perspective. Members call on the European Commission to assess the possibility of proposing a more systematic pooling of available resources in order to strengthen the effectiveness of prevention mechanisms across the EU.

Emphasising that responsibility for disaster prevention lies primarily with the Member States and that the principle of subsidiarity in this area should continue to be considered, the report calls on the Member States who are responsible for land management to introduce criteria and legislation in order to prevent catastrophes in areas at risk of flood and landslides and other geological risks, taking into account the problems created by indiscriminate deforestation, and furthermore to prevent construction in these areas.

The report highlights the importance of viewing prevention from a cross-cutting perspective, incorporating it in the relevant sectoral policies to promote balanced land occupation and cohesive economic and social development that is in tune with nature. It recognises that some sectoral policies have led to certain regions being more exposed to risk by encouraging abandonment of the countryside and excessive concentration of the population in urban areas. It considers that agricultural and forestry production are vulnerable to climatic phenomena and calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage the implementation of good agricultural practices.

The committee advocates, as an essential element in the effective prevention of natural disasters, an environmentally and socially balanced agricultural policy that takes into account the need to support and stimulate sustainable agricultural production and rural development in the various countries and regions. The Commission is urged to come forward with a proposal for an European public insurance system to better address the risk and income instability of farmers related to natural and man-made disasters.

Members emphasise the importance of public research and development (R&D) in preventing and managing disasters and call for increased coordination and cooperation between the R&D institutions of Member States, especially those facing similar risks. They call for enhanced early warning systems in Member States and the creation and strengthening of links between the various early warning systems.

The Commission is also invited to:

- present a proposal for a directive, similar to the directive on floods, to promote the adoption of an EU policy on water scarcity, drought and adaptation to climate change;
- promote the entry into operation of the European Drought and Desertification Observatory which would be responsible for studying, mitigating and monitoring the effects of droughts and desertification aiming to enhance sound, strategic decision-making and better coordination between Member States;
- present and to carry out, together with the Member States, legislative proposals and initiatives in the area of forest protection and fire prevention;
- study and propose to the Council and the European Parliament ways of implementing coercive measures which will discourage negligence and deliberate action in the starting of fires.

Lastly, the report calls on the Commission to support Member States in promoting awareness-raising campaigns for prevention and in adopting best practices, providing relevant updated information and training to the general public through channels that are easily accessible to all citizens on identified risks and procedures to be adopted when faced with natural or man-made disaster situations.

Report on the Commission communication: 'A community approach on the prevention of natural and man made disasters'

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Commission communication: A Community approach on the prevention of natural and man made disasters.

The resolution welcomes the commitment made by the Commission to ensuring that disaster-prevention-related issues are taken into account more coherently in EU policies and programmes, and stresses the need for a holistic approach to disaster prevention.

Given the scale and/or the cross-border nature that disasters may assume, Members consider it necessary to enhance cooperation, both at regional and EU level, based on complementarity of action, dissemination of best practices and the principle of solidarity between Member States. They take the view that coordinated actions and strategies between Member States, the different sectors and the different actors involved in the disaster management cycle can lead to real advances in the field of disaster prevention.

The Parliament supports the proposal to set up a network made up of representatives of the various competent national services of all the Member States. It emphasises the role of this network in exchanging experience and prevention measures and in establishing a common methodology and minimum requirements for hazard and risk mapping at EU level.

Revision of the Solidarity Fund Regulation: the resolution points out the importance of reducing inequalities between regions and Member States in terms of their capacity to protect their populations, and their property, including the cultural heritage, by supporting their efforts to improve prevention, particularly in the regions and Member States that are highly vulnerable to the risk of disasters. It urges that particular attention be paid to the most isolated, most sparsely populated, mountainous and border regions of Europe, and the most economically disadvantaged European regions. In this regard, Members highlight the need for the Solidarity Fund Regulation to be revised by adapting the eligibility criteria to the characteristics of each region and each disaster, including slowly evolving disasters such as drought, paying particular attention to production sectors, the most vulnerable areas and the populations affected, and enabling mobilisation to be more flexible and timely.

Members point out that cohesion policy is an essential tool in natural disaster risk prevention. They consider that it must be possible for the

various funds and instruments to operate flexibly and in a coordinated manner in order to improve the functioning and effectiveness of that policy.

Financial Framework: the resolution stresses the need to create a suitable financial framework for disaster prevention, with adequate financial resources for preventing and combating disasters, that will strengthen and link existing instruments. It asks that, in this context, prevention should be taken into account in the 2014-2020 Financial Perspective. Members call on the European Commission to assess the possibility of proposing a more systematic pooling of available resources in order to strengthen the effectiveness of prevention mechanisms across the EU.

Emphasising that responsibility for disaster prevention lies primarily with the Member States and that the principle of subsidiarity in this area should continue to be considered, the report calls on the Member States who are responsible for land management to introduce criteria and legislation in order to prevent catastrophes in areas at risk of flood and landslides and other geological risks, taking into account the problems created by indiscriminate deforestation, and furthermore to prevent construction in these areas.

The resolution highlights the importance of viewing prevention from a cross-cutting perspective, incorporating it in the relevant sectoral policies to promote balanced land occupation and cohesive economic and social development that is in tune with nature. It recognises that some sectoral policies have led to certain regions being more exposed to risk by encouraging abandonment of the countryside and excessive concentration of the population in urban areas. It considers that agricultural and forestry production are vulnerable to climatic phenomena and calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage the implementation of good agricultural practices.

The Parliament advocates, as an essential element in the effective prevention of natural disasters, an environmentally and socially balanced agricultural policy that takes into account the need to support and stimulate sustainable agricultural production and rural development in the various countries and regions. The Commission is urged to come forward with a proposal for a European public insurance system to better address the risk and income instability of farmers related to natural and man-made disasters.

Members emphasise the importance of public research and development (R&D) in preventing and managing disasters and call for increased coordination and cooperation between the R&D institutions of Member States, especially those facing similar risks. They call for enhanced early warning systems in Member States and the creation and strengthening of links between the various early warning systems.

Given that the starting of fires and the increase in their frequency are by nature environmental offences, Parliament calls on the Commission to study and propose to the Council and the European Parliament ways of implementing coercive measures which will discourage negligence and deliberate action in the starting of fires.

The Commission is also invited to:

- present a proposal for a directive, similar to the directive on floods, to promote the adoption of an EU policy on water scarcity, drought and adaptation to climate change;
- promote the entry into operation of the European Drought and Desertification Observatory which would be responsible for studying, mitigating and monitoring the effects of droughts and desertification aiming to enhance sound, strategic decision-making and better coordination between Member States;
- present and to carry out, together with the Member States, legislative proposals and initiatives in the area of forest protection and fire prevention.

Lastly, the resolution calls on the Commission to support Member States in promoting awareness-raising campaigns for prevention and in adopting best practices, providing relevant updated information and training to the general public through channels that are easily accessible to all citizens on identified risks and procedures to be adopted when faced with natural or man-made disaster situations.